

WRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement demonstrates your unique qualifications to an admissions committee and illustrates your writing ability, creativity, and career goals. Admissions committee members look for interesting, insightful, and specifically individualized personal statements that provide concrete evidence of your competence and motivation. Most personal statements are 2-3 pages.

CONTENT

A personal statement may be requested to assess your interest in the program or field and your ability to write clearly and correctly. Personal statements include:

- Information about yourself and your career goals.
- When and how you became interested in the field.
- What you have learned from experiences related to the field (employment, volunteer activities, research).
- What personal characteristics (integrity, initiative, resilience, persistence) or special skills (leadership, writing) you have that would enhance your prospects for success in this program or field.
- Why you are interested in the particular program; anything else that makes you a strong applicant.

PREPARE TO WRITE

Deciding on a topic to write about can be challenging at first. To help facilitate your writing process, take some time to reflect on the following:

- **Personal History** — Prior life experiences, events, and achievements relevant to your career choice or application to graduate school. Life events are experiences that are distinct or unique which relate to your professional goals. You may also want to think about the people who have influenced your decision to pursue this field or who have had a significant impact on your values as they relate to this choice.
- **Academic Life** — Research interests and prior experience, academic accomplishments and/or recognitions, and influential professors/mentors.
- **Work Experience** — Previous jobs, internships, volunteer experience, and extracurricular or co-curricular activities that have influenced your career choice or career goals.



Helpful Questions

- What are your short- and long-term goals?
- Why do you want to apply to this program?
- How did you learn about the field? What stimulated your interest in this field?
- What are the special features/values of this program that attracted you to it, and how do they match your own interests, values, and skills?
- What is special, distinctive, unique, or impressive about you or your life story?
- Have you overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships?
- What is the most important thing for an admissions committee to know about you?

Tips

- Follow the prompt directions to guide your writing.
- Aim for depth, not breadth by sharing specific examples.
- Choose a font style and size that can be easily read by your audience.
- Write in first person.
- Focus on one or two specific themes and discuss related experiences.
- Concentrate on capturing the reader's interest through the opening paragraph.
- Use unique life experiences to stand out and connect those to professional goals and career motivation.
- Identify your strengths and clearly articulate what sets you apart from other applicants.
- Tailor the essay for each school and clearly state reasons for pursuing a degree from that school.
- Proofread for typos and grammatical errors.
- Seek feedback.

PERSONAL STATEMENT EVALUATION CHART

Questions to Ask	Comments
1. Did my opening paragraph capture the reader's attention?	
2. Does it answer key questions posed in the application?	
3. Is it well-written? (e.g., grammar, tone, verb agreement)	
4. Is it free of typos or other errors?	
5. Does it explain my career aspirations?	
6. Does the reader gain insight from reading the statement?	
7. Does it reflect well on me and my qualifications? (Includes specific examples of experiences)	
8. Is the statement positive and upbeat?	
9. Is the statement as a whole interesting?	
10. Is it an honest and forthright presentation of me, relevant to my goals?	
11. Is there inappropriate or irrelevant material in the statement?	
12. Was relevant material omitted?	
13. Are there any gaps or discrepancies in my academic record that need to be addressed?	

